

Our Chairman, Peter Knox, has returned from conducting another successful tour of the Crimea, about which several members have written me expressing how much they enjoyed the trip. Dr. Douglas Austin will be doing a write up of the tour for our next journal, but I feel a recent e-mail to me concerning his experiences on the tour will give you the flavor of one of these tours, and hopefully entice others of you to take the plunge: *"Just returned from a great time in the Crimea - not all of it war-oriented, thank goodness. All sorts of entertaining incidents :- 1) I have put on weight and have acquired a sun tan - and a streaming head-cold from racing across chilly London to catch the last Ely train of the day. 2) Took ca. 1000 pix and some movies. 3) Haggled successfully for a small prayer mat in the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, beating the bloke down to one- third of his grossly excessive starting price. N.B. He still made a good profit..'. 4) Bought a handsome book of rare Sevastopol engravings. 5) Befriended by a small grey cat, which - to general amusement - came out of nowhere and settled down on my knee while I was taking a rest in the grounds of the Livadia Palace. [The feline is included in our Group photo. Nice little beastie.] 6) During our Group Dinner in a Tartar restaurant, I was touring the place taking a photo-montage of the exotic setting for Jo Fisher, when I was waylaid by a Ukrainian giant called Alekhs (He really was HUGE!) and forcibly obliged to join his party as a mark of UA hospitality! There followed a session of eating bread and salt (very traditional) and nibbling some of their delicious grub. A largish shot of vodka ensued. Happily, our pretty lady guide got worried as to where I had disappeared to and came along to translate. Swearing eternal brotherhood (as one does) and kissing the ladies' hands (as alcoholic fellows do), I stumbled back to my meal and the raised eyebrows of several.*



Problem:- I had not completed my photo-montage for Jo, so I left our table again to prowl the premises. By James Christmas, Alekhs grabbed me again for a second session - including a rather larger shot of vodka! A good bloke, just being friendly. BTW, I did finally get to finish my Tartar meal (very tasty) and I was feeling no pain as the tour bus trundled back to our hotel in Yalta..."